

## Evolving an Idea

*By Donna Bishop*

The Optimist Club is a service club that for almost 100 years has focused on helping youth. The founders of the organization were businessmen who were concerned about delinquent boys in their community. At one point in the history of Windsor Gardens there were four chartered Optimist Clubs with a membership of over 200 men. Currently there is only one club with a membership of about 80 members, both men and women. Optimists now serve both young men and women.

Each year the club selects a number of projects to support, both financially and with volunteer hours. In addition to our regular efforts this year we decided to sponsor a community-wide service project, Colorado Feeding Kids Pack. State research show that one in seven Colorado children lives in poverty.

Colorado Feeding Kids is a local non-profit that purchases bulk foods for nutritious meals which have been scientifically tested. The organization then sponsors all-volunteer packing events in which the foods are packed into individual packages containing five meal servings. Each meal cost 25 cents. The meals are distributes through local food banks and schools.

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, Colorado Feeding Kids will deliver to CenterPoint enough bulk food to pack 20,000 meals. With 100 volunteers it is estimated it will take about two hours to accomplish this service project. Tables will accommodate teams of ten volunteers. Six standing jobs and four sitting jobs. It is an assembly line project that is easy to learn and can be done by ages eight and above. This is a great opportunity to bring your grandchildren or great grandchildren to share the experience of helping other children.

The bulk food will cost \$5,000 for 20,000 meals. As Optimists stated planning for this project many ideas were tossed around about how to raise the \$5,000. One thought was we would “plant” pinwheels around the community for each donation of \$10 we received. It didn’t seem impossible that 500 people in this community might donate \$10 each to reach a goal of \$5,000. With more discussion a decision was made to sponsor two events to raise the money needed.

On August 31 from 3:00-6:00 at the gazebos there will be an hour of Mariachi music along with a cash bar and hors d’oeuvres. Ticket are \$15 which will all go to Colorado Feeding Kids. A second fundraiser is planned for September 23 with My Father’s Mustache in the Auditorium at Windsor Gardens. The tickets are \$15 with all proceeds going to Colorado Feeding Kids.

We still liked the idea of using the pinwheels. An afterthought was presented of using the pinwheels to demonstrate the success of the fundraising efforts. Each pinwheel that appears on the grounds of Windsor Gardens will represent \$50 collected towards the goal. We will start with a patch of pinwheels near the gazebos and then spread out the pinwheels in the community as donations are received. Hopefully they will remind neighbors to donate and also to volunteer for the event.